

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** January 9, 2002

**TO:** Division of Shellfish Sanitation Staff

**FROM:** Robert E. Croonenberghs, PhD, Director  
Division of Shellfish Sanitation

**THROUGH:** Robert W. Hicks, Director  
Office of Environmental Health Services

**SUBJECT:** Plants - Procedure - Product Sampling Procedure

**CANCEL WORKING MEMO #185**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this memo is to provide a policy for a standard approach to be followed when taking product samples. The central concept in this memo is that the sampling procedure is set up to reasonably try to capture variability of bacteriological results as it exists in the product.

**The following procedures shall be followed for shellfish plants:**

- 1). Try to obtain shellfish samples monthly for all certified plants.
- 2). For dealers using multiple sources of shellfish, try to sample a different source during each month's routine inspection so that in time all sources are eventually sampled.
- 3). Try to collect two samples of both shellstock and shucked product from the same shipment, so that one can make an assessment of processing effects on the product.
- 4). When collecting shucked product, each sample shall be taken from a different container (if packed product is sampled) and placed into its own sample jar. Shucked product shall not be put into one container and then subdivided later in the lab.
- 5). When sampling, be very careful to observe sterile technique as much as possible. For example, never place the inside top of the shellstock can down on a surface. Never place your ice chest or sample containers on a skimmer, packing table etc., because you appear to (and may) contaminate the plant's food contact surfaces.

**The following procedures shall be followed for crab plants:**

- 6). Try to obtain crab samples monthly from all certified plants.
- 7). Crab samples each month should consist of one sample of each type of finished product available from the plant (backfin, regular, special) and whole cooked crab.
- 8). When picked meat is sampled from the packing table, take samples from different parts of the pile. When whole cooked crabs are sampled, remove crabs from various places in that pile.
- 9). Sterile technique must be followed in handling product.
- 10). Do not place unsanitized or nonsterile equipment on any of the plant's food contact surfaces, or allow any such equipment to come in contact with the plant's product, temperature sensing probes, etc.

**The following procedures shall be followed for sampling pasteurized crab meat:**

- 11). Pasteurized crab meat refrigeration room temperatures are to be checked and noted on the inspection form. (This includes all on and off premises storage facilities.)
- 12). Storage temperature is to be above freezing but no greater than 36°F. (Type F Clostridia botulinum may outgrow at 37°F).
- 13). Sampling of pasteurized crab meat shall be once each quarter, minimally.
- 14). Normally, two random samples shall be obtained from the oldest lot along with identifying information.
- 15). Check cans from several randomly chosen master cartons within the lot being sampled. Look for swollen cans and record the number observed per box or case. If "swellers" or "leakers" are found in a given lot, 5 samples shall be collected from that lot that are not "swellers" or "leakers". Some "swellers" and "leakers" should be taken to the lab for can seam and pin hole leak analysis.
- 16). Collect each sample from different master cartons of a given lot.
- 17). Complete the attached form, which gives space to record the above information. Only one is needed for each lot.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
DIVISION OF SHELLFISH SANITATION

Pasteurized Crab Meat Sampling Information

DATE:

Plant Name, Number & Address

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ID #s from bacteriological forms

Lab. #s from bacteriological forms

1. Processing date
2. Code date
3. Refrigeration room temperature
4. Routine sampling? Yes \_\_\_ No
5. Swellers or leakers \_\_\_ out of \_\_\_ checked. A total of 5 samples is to be collected from "bad" lot and 2 samples from next oldest lot.
6. Number of cans initially processed in each lot.
7. Number of cans on hand \_\_\_\_\_ Number of cases (in each lot)
8. Metal \_\_\_\_\_ Plastic \_\_\_\_\_ Size
9. Process standardized? Yes \_\_\_ No
10. Standardization followed? Yes \_\_\_ No
11. Copy of Standardization on file? Yes \_\_\_ No  
DSS Yes \_\_\_ No
12. Obtain and attach copy of pasteurization chart for pertinent lot.
13. Obtain copy of standardization for any additional can sizes or new procedure.
14. Provide any pertinent information (e.g. length of time of power outage, compressor failure, etc.)

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